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ABSTRACT

Teacher education programs should be improved, and a system should be developed that will enable the teaching profession to become autonomous. A five-year multi-phase program should be implemented, with high admission standards and grade requirements, and proceed through core courses and field-based experiences to an area of specialization and student teaching in the fourth year. Teaching skills would be honed in an internship in the fifth year. At the conclusion of the internship, the student would take the state's Professional Educator Board Examination, developed by members of the profession. Upon passing this examination the teacher would receive a three-year provisional license, and full licensing would take place upon completion of the Master of Education in Teaching degree. Entry into the profession would be controlled by the professionals themselves. To this end, the policy-making prerogative currently reserved by state agencies would be transferred, through legislation, to state consortia that consist of elected representatives from both higher education and the public schools within the state. A state-wide teacher education association would then be responsible for setting the criteria for admission to the profession and for maintaining control of standards for retention. As a self-policing agency, members of the association would be accountable to the association for competent performance and maintaining public trust in the competence and integrity of the profession. (JD)

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A STATEWIDE CONSORTIUM OF TEACHER EDUCATORS: A MODEL FOR COMPLETE PROFESSIONAL CONTROL AND ORGANIZATION

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A Statewide Consortium of Teacher Educators: A Model for Complete Professional Control and Organization

Historically, the matter of education has resided within the domain of states rights and more often than not reflected local mores and values. Geographic conditions as well as the availability of competent teachers dictated curricular offerings and determined the quality of the instruction. Before "teacher education became formalized during the nineteenth century with the introduction of the normal school, patterned on French and Prussian teacher training schools,"[1] teacher preparation focused largely on an itinerate teacher concept with the prevailing instructional axium being, "teach as you were taught." During the antebellum period, methods of teaching and training teachers improved largely through the works of Froebel, Pestalozzi, Herbert, and Colonel Francis Parker. However, by the turn of the century, approximately "60 percent of the teachers had no pre-service training; the remainder had attended a normal school, at the most a two-year program begun at the high school."[2] As the century progressed, normal schools gradually evolved into state teacher colleges with curricular offerings consisting of liberal arts courses, subject field concentration and a professional educational sequence. Modeled after European prototypes, teacher preparation programs were designed to produce well-rounded individuals who possessed a common culture and a common set of values.[3]

Unlike the other professions that gravitated to the university in search of stature and independent governance, the teaching profession retained its identity with state policy-making bodies and administrative agencies. Through state legislated certification and program requirements, the interest of the teaching profession became subordinated to the schools and state agencies.[4] Other professions, such as law and medicine, where

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the common mode of employment is service, (even though those bodies are under private or public control), have developed autonomously and have primarily acted in their own interests to upgrade the level of service.[5] These professions have a defined body of knowledge with correlated skills and behavior which provide discrete services to the client or employer. Moreover, these professions are so structured that the state allows them to have their own governing bodies and to be autonomous and assume self-regulatory functions. In the teaching profession, however, organizational control is multi-dimensional in that state institutions such as departments of education, universities and local school districts have considerable input in controlling the direction of the profession. As such, the teaching profession tends to serve the interests of the institutions as opposed to the direct interests of the client or employer.

During the past twenty years, "the view has emerged that teaching should be an autonomous profession pursuing its own development and destiny."[6] If teacher education is to reach a stature of autonomy, (comparable to that which currently exists in Oregon), and enjoy the degree of respect afforded to the other professions, a higher level of academic rigor, coupled with organizational control that resides within a central policy-making body, will have to exist. Programs leading to the preparation of teacher educators, compared with those programs that prepare their professional counterparts, are greatly lacking in both curricular substance and the length of time required for program completion.[7] Four years of pre-service preparation with less than twenty semester hours of professional education courses clouds professional credibility and promotes questions concerning adequacy of preparation and, therefore, competency.[8] Furthermore, the contemporary cry for

accountability from educators and non-educators alike, provides additional impetus for the restructuring of existing pre-service programs and for the establishment of a central regulatory body that is free from bureaucratization and to whom the practitioner is accountable for competent performance.

Pre-service teacher education programs, if they are not to face extinction, need to attract a higher caliber of student and introduce curricula that are more rigorous intellectually.[9] Teacher education students at one time compared favorably with students in other programs regarding high school academic rank, grade-point average and standardized test scores. "But now the average verbal S.A.T. score of students going into teacher education is below 400--the second lowest score among all groups of college majors."[10] This fact becomes more salient in light of recent research which associates student achievement with teachers' verbal S.A.T. scores. Currently, teacher education programs do not even faintly resemble the protracted programs of their professional counterparts. If academic respectability is to be attained a more comprehensive and indepth pre-service program is needed. Like law and medicine, teacher education programs need to consist of more than one dimension. Completion of a five year, multi-phase program, would become the basis for eligibility to become a licensed practicing professional.

Criteria for entrance into the teacher education program needs to be enhanced beyond that which is currently implemented. Initiating admissions standards based on rigorous empirical research has the potential of providing a greater degree of quality control at the point of entry. Because teaching encompasses a repertoire of knowledge, skills, behaviors, the question of screening prospective teachers needs to address,

therefore, the intellectual capability and the personality traits of candidates seeking admission to teacher education. Although the current literature indicates that agreement has not yet been reached concerning the extent to which measures of intellectual development and personality factors relate to success in teaching, concentrated research efforts in this direction clearly need to be undertaken. With the goal of establishing higher admissions standards, the compilation of baseline data on cognitive measures such as the S.A.T. and the California Test of Mental Maturity as well as the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) and the Teacher Practices Inventory (TPI) could serve as the basis for developing regression equators for predicting one's successful completion of the teacher preparation program.

Because entry into a profession implies a greater than average ability, initial cut-off scores set at the eighth percentile or, in the case of the personality inventories, two standard deviations above the mean are worthy of consideration. Minimum scores would precede admission into the teacher education program which would begin in earnest during the second year. Out of necessity to remain consistent with general university or college admissions standards, first year students would meet those requirements required of all students entering the institution. A combined grade point average of 3.0 (A = 4.0) on all first year work, which would comprise courses in the liberal arts or "core curriculum", as well as satisfactory recommendations on a required interview with a panel of education professors assessing the candidates' seriousness of purpose and their strong desire to enter the profession. These factors would supplement test scores as requirements for admission into the teacher education program.

Curricular requirements such as the introductory course to education, teaching and learning theories, motivation strategies, as well as the basic course in educational psychology would punctuate course work in the students' area of concentration. On-campus study would be supplemented with field-based experiences (actual participation in public school-related activities) along with seminars pertaining to field experiences. In an effort to combine theory with practice through the adoption of a clinical-oriented model, students would have the opportunity to become aware of the day-to-day duties and responsibilities of practicing professionals in a classroom setting. Instructional activities would include individual tutoring, grading papers, planning lessons and the like. Under the guidance and supervision of both the teacher and the college supervisor, the student would receive continuous direction, support and feedback regarding the application of accepted pedagogical techniques and practice. Anecdotal records regarding the quality of classroom work and seminar participation would serve as the primary source of student evaluation.

At the conclusion of the second year, student performance in both course work and field-based activities would be assessed by a panel of education professors. Assessment findings, along with a student interview with panel members, would determine satisfactory or unsatisfactory student performance and, therefore, one's ability to continue in the teacher education program. Criteria for satisfactory performance would include positive recommendations by both practicing professionals and college supervisors (anecdotal records included), at least a B average in all course work, both pedagogical and non-pedagogical, as well as a satisfactory rating on the panel interview which is designed to ascertain the degree to which students are committed to the goals and mission of the profession.

Third and fourth-year students would take extensive course work in their major area of concentration. Professional education courses would include: the psychological basis of education; the sociological basis of education; the philosophical basis of education; human relations techniques; and, basic instructional media competencies. Students entering the fourth year of the program would complete the remaining number of courses in their major area of concentration and focus their attention on additional profession preparation courses. These courses would include tests and measurements, curriculum theory and development, advanced educational psychology, principles of learning, special education, mainstreaming techniques, advanced motivation and teaching strategies, a special methods course for area of concentration, individualized teaching-learning techniques, research and evaluation methods, and basic statistics.

Field-based seminars, emphasizing the diagnostic-prescriptive approach to instruction, would supplement on-campus course work. Field-based activities would vary and intensify as students progressed in the program. For example, third-year students would become involved in conducting small group instruction, individual tutoring and assisting the teacher in designing and implementing student-centered projects. Fourth-year student involvement would build upon prior experiences and concentrate on large and small group instruction, test development and analysis, long range unit planning, and extensive use of diagnostic-prescriptive instructional techniques in planning and implementing instructional strategies. On-going evaluation of student performance by both university and public school personnel would provide the basis for a comprehensive personal profile regarding student progress and accomplishments in all

field-based activities over the two-year period of time. This report, coupled with the use of video tapes of actual classroom performance, anecdotal records evaluating the quality of seminar involvement and a minimum GPA of 3.0 on course work attempted, would become part of the criteria used for admission into the intern phase of the teacher education program. Supplemented by a score that exceeds the 80th percentile on a standardized test like the National Teacher Examination, student records would be reviewed and evaluated by a board of educators consisting of education professors and appointed public school teachers and administrators. Unsuccessful candidates would have an opportunity to remediate deficiencies based on board approval. Successful candidates would enter into a year-long internship.

At the conclusion of the fourth year, pre-professional students (interns) would have completed all requirements necessary for admission into graduate school. This is a necessary requirement in that during the fifth year of the program, pre-service students would be required to take a minimum of 15 quarter hours or 9 semester hours of graduate work while completing a full year's internship. The internship, a more clinical-oriented approach to contemporary student teaching, would be punctuated by weekly seminars conducted jointly between the supervising teachers and the college supervisors. Pre-service students would have responsibility for conducting in-depth instruction at multiple grade levels with a variety of children (low achievers through gifted and talented). Program emphasis would be on diagnosing and prescribing instructional needs, use of therapeutic techniques, program development and planning, and evaluating instructional outcomes. Large group seminars, conducted on campus during the year for the purpose of viewing

and critiquing video tapes of interns, would be a salient part of the clinical process. Each intern's performance would be evaluated by an examining board consisting of both professors and teachers and focusing on anecdotal records, reviews of video tapes and observations made during on-site visits.

Upon completing the fifth year, pre-service students would receive the Bachelor of Education in Teaching (B.E.T.) degree and be required to take the state's Professional Educator Board Examination (PEBE) which, like the bar examination for prospective lawyers, would be developed by members of the profession (university and public school personnel) who reside within the state and could consist of four major sections:

(1) Development and use of teaching plans and instructional materials;

(2) Use and application of interpersonal skills and classroom management strategies;

(3) Test construction and evaluation methodologies--ability to apply descriptive statistical techniques to student test scores, interpreting standardized test results, etc.;

(4) A series of case studies focusing on the clinical application of learning and motivation theories, use of diagnostic and prescriptive techniques, practical applications of learning principles, and the like.

The examination would be graded by elected professionals who would serve on a rotating basis with criteria for successful completion being set by the profession. After passing the PEBE, the teacher would receive a provisional license to practice in the schools for a period of three years. Full licensing would take place upon completion of the Master of Education in Teaching (M.E.T.) degree, and successful written

recommendations by approved examining peer professionals who make on-site evaluative observations of teacher performance during the three-year provisional period. The initial license would be valid for seven years and renewable in seven year increments. Because education is ongoing, teachers need to be provided with the opportunity to keep up with the latest developments in the field. As such, participation in continuing education programs, approved by the board and paid for by the state would be required of each teacher throughout their professional career. Educators holding the Doctor of Education in Teaching degree (D.E.T.) would primarily be responsible for developing and implementing continuing education programs since their expertise would qualify them as professional consultants. Acting in this capacity, they would of necessity remain current with the latest research findings and professional publications and would, therefore, be the keystone in the continuing education program.

Consequently, entry into a profession should be controlled by professionals themselves. To do otherwise erodes the quality of the product and weakens the organizational control and policy-making authority of the profession. To this end, professional educators (university and public school personnel alike) need to function as the organization's governing body. Through broad-based representation from both sectors, accompanied by concise policy statements and a clearly defined code of professional responsibility which would be enforced by consistent leadership, the teaching profession can gain continuity in governance and, therefore, fully enjoy the respect of the related professions. To this end, the policy-making prerogative currently reserved by state agencies needs to be transferred, through popular legislation, to state

consortiums that consist of elected representatives from both higher education and the public schools within the state.

The state-wide Teacher Education Association would then be responsible for setting criteria for admission into the state association which would constitute the licensing body of the profession through jointly approving a common program of studies, the development and administration of a professional licensing examination (PEBE), and control over admission and retention of its members. Membership in the association would be mandatory in order to receive a license to practice (teach).

As a self-policing agency, members of the association would be accountable to the association for competent performance and for maintaining public trust in the competence and integrity of the profession. Through autonomous control, society can be assured of quality performance since the standards of practice are set by the profession to which the practitioner is accountable. This is not to say, however, that state boards of education and state education agencies would not be responsible for all other aspects of the public school system. It does maintain that they would not be responsible for control and direction of the profession.

At the national level, the National Board of Teacher Educators would primarily serve in an advisory capacity and engage in such areas as conducting research and disseminating its findings, setting standards of conduct, and assisting states in decision-making/policy-making activities. The Board's membership would be comprised of professionals from both higher education and the public school sector with members being nominated and elected from all licensed professionals in all fifty states. More honorary in scope than functional, the Board would

oversee the general interest and integrity of its membership and coordinate national efforts through state participation.

Moreover, by promoting popular legislation and adopting broad-based representation through a state-wide autonomous governing organization that assumes responsibility for the selection and retention of its members, protracted teacher education programs that are uniform in nature have the opportunity for providing the basis for rigorous professional development. To this end, the need exists to solidify fragmented efforts in the interest of fostering unity of purpose--the commitment to the rights and privileges of the profession. If it can be hypothesized that the upgrading of professional preparation must precede, and not follow, improved conditions associated with its practice, then curricular reorganization based on sound pedagogical principles and research findings is essential to enhancing the end product--a fully competent professional. The opportunity currently exists for reform in teacher education programs. With an ever increasing knowledge-base and the contemporary cry for accountability, the time is right for visionary thought and a commitment to the novel that will initiate steps leading to the passage of legislation which will increase the stature of our maturing profession.

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